

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #461-2

with

Elizabeth Kimura (EK)

August 14, 1993

Waimea, Hawai`i

BY: Holly Yamada (HY)

HY: This is a continuation of the Elizabeth Kimura interview, session two.

What do you think the community's response was when Hartwell [*Carter*] began taking over most of the managerial work?

EK: Well, first of all, this little community has been known as Parker Ranch. So everything that's done here or any kind of work, program, social activities is with Parker Ranch. So, with Mr. [A.W.] Carter, as far as I have known him, he's really a respected man by everybody in the state, and especially the employees. Employees really look up to him. Nobody dares argue with him or contradict him, or whatever, because what he says goes.

Because at that time he

was probably about—he came into the ranch as a lawyer. And when he took over the

guardianship of the Parker [*Ranch*] estate, he was really not quite knowledgeable about cattle,

but since he was brought into the ranch to manage the ranch, he learned a lot. He read books

and he attended workshops or whatever. And because of his intelligence, he became a well-

known cattleman, more than an attorney. But I guess the attorney [*background*] helped him a

lot, you know. And he was firm in his decisions. He was somebody, when we see him coming,

we're all scared. My father, he was scared of. . . . I don't think he was ever relaxed with him

in their meetings because he doesn't know what's going to come out.

HY: Did A.W. ever socialize with others...

EK: No. Not with the employees. But he was the type that took care of the family. He really had a concern for the individuals and for each member of the family. He was always there when you needed help. He would never question you, "Why? Why do you need this? Why you need that?" But he would always come through with whatever. Well, the people of those days don't dare go

into his office and say, "Oh, I want this, I want that." Because they probably know that because of his firmness, he stood firm, they just can't take advantage of him. Nobody dared, did that.

HY: Why do you think, even though people respected him, they feared him? Why is it they were afraid?

EK: I guess it's the way he holds himself. I mean, he really holds himself real businesslike. And it shows his authority. I guess, well, we, people, we always look up to somebody like that. It's just like the schoolteachers those days. Our parents always felt the schoolteachers was there (with some authority) and they were always right. They never doubted any. It's not like nowadays, the parents just feel that they're above the teachers. It's just, I guess, respect for those with authority or those with little bit more education.

HY: And then when Hartwell, he came on . . .

EK: Hartwell was really, he's a soft person. He didn't have his father's traits at all, no.

HY: So, he was less respected, would you say?

EK: (No,) I would (not) say (that).

HY: Did people fear him?

EK: No.

HY: No?

EK: Mm mm. [*That's right.*]

HY: And what about socializing? Did he [*Hartwell Carter*] socialize with you a little bit?

EK: No. Those days, (management hardly) socialize with the employees, except for when the ranch puts up a Christmas program for the families and a New Year's *lu'au* for families. That was the only time. There's no time for socializing. Everybody was so busy working, working.

HY: Would employees ever go to their homes?

EK: (Except for a few, we were) not invited.

HY: When Richard Smart came back . . .

EK: Then he broke the. . . .

HY: With that tradition.

EK: Yeah, mm hmm. He broke the tradition.

HY: Can you describe how that happened?

EK: (With his exposure in the Mainland for so long.) When he came back, he would gather a few of the employees) at his home down at Pu`u`opelu . . .

HY: He invited the employees to his home?

EK: He invited the employees to his home for dinners. Not all, you know, a group at a time. And that was nice. And then Mr. [Richard] Penhallow was here, too. He opened up his house to the employees. But Hartwell (hardly) did. Probably just a certain group of people only, but not the employees as a whole.

HY: Did the community still respect Richard Smart and Penhallow . . .

EK: Penhallow was assistant manager for (about) twelve years, I'm not sure. *[Richard Penhallow served as a general manager for only two years—1960–1962—but began working at Parker Ranch in 1947.]* So when he (came to work for Parker Ranch, he was) respected. The people outside of Waimea did respect him, on the county level. And employees did look up to him.

HY: So would you say that their ability to open their doors socially to the Waimea community didn't undermine their authority?

EK: No, *[it did not]*. That was nice because they had nice wives. You know, these managers had beautiful wives, so they were really hospitable to the ranch employees' families, too.

HY: How would you characterize Richard Smart?

EK: Well, Richard was away for so long. When he finally came back, we were happy that he came back to at least oversee the ranch. And this was not until the [19]60s when he finally came back. Of course, we were kind of doubtful because we didn't think that he knew enough about ranching because he was more into acting and stage. But he was, as a whole, I think, a nice man and he took care of his employees and he improved the community. That's one thing he really did was provided different means for the community to enjoy. Like our shopping center, he started our shopping center *[Parker Ranch Shopping Center]*. He (built) the school gym, a library. I mean, there's lot of good deeds he did for the community as a whole. We kind of felt the county *[County of Hawai`i]* (could have assumed this responsibility). (The gym is a community facility, however, Parker School uses the facility for physical education. The *[Thelma Parker School Public]* Library is now designated as a Waimea school-community library.)

We never got all this recreational facilities or whatever from the county. It was from Mr. Smart. He would start the project and then probably turn it over to the county to upkeep it, you know. And he would provide lands for

different uses. He wasn't a stingy man. Well, he had a little Hawaiian in him, so that part was good. He has, I don't know, maybe a quarter Hawaiian in him through his ancestors. So he did have that love for his people.

HY: Do you think the community now is happy with the trusteeship? I know there's this will dispute with his sons [*Gillard Smart and Anthony Smart contested their father's will, and Gillard Smart brought a lawsuit against trustees Warren Gunderson, Richard Hendrick and Melvin Hewitt*] . . .

EK: (Yes), there is this dispute. I guess it's not the community (who is reacting with the trusteeship). It's probably the employees, (who was accustomed with a management-type operation). That's the way I feel. Because the community doesn't know, except for a few people, of course.

HY: How do you think the employees feel about this trusteeship . . .

EK: Well, some of them are not happy with the selection of the trustees, you know. I don't know. I personally don't know them well enough. And then we've been out of the ranch for so long that we (are out of reach as to its operation). So I really don't know how it's going on. Except for the few who've been with the ranch up until Mr. Smart passed away are not happy with the (new) organization.

HY: Were there people in the ranch that sided with the sons?

EK: (Yes), there are. There are people who are with the sons. And there are people who felt that (probably, they are) not capable enough to assume that role. (Gil Smart has had less experience on the ranch whereas, Tony [*Anthony Smart*] did work on the ranch and was well liked by the boys.)

HY: Just to backtrack a little, going back to wartime, I understand the courthouse, was that used for social activities?

EK: At one time, yeah, it was used for social activity. That's where we have all our—because that was the only building that was available for social activities. You know, meetings and dancing. They used to have dancing there.

HY: Did that happen during wartime?

EK: It was before the war.

HY: Before the war?

EK: Yeah. The courthouse was [*used for social activities*] before the war.

HY: Okay. And did it stop during the war or was. . . .

EK: No, it was functioning as a police department.

HY: Oh, okay. But it was no longer used as a social gathering place?

EK: No, it was no longer used as a. . . . It was way before the war started where it was---in the meantime we had built this Barbara Hall where the Parker School is now. That was built for social activities. And then, that [*courthouse*] building there was used by the police department and for court cases.

HY: And the Barbara Hall was renamed, is that right?

EK: It was renamed after Richard's [*Richard Smart's*] mother. Richard's mother, Kahilu [*taken from the first three syllables of her Hawaiian name—Thelma Kahiluon\_puaapi`ilani Parker Smart*]. It was named Kahilu Hall. And then, the Parker School took over, so now it's called the Parker School. And then, Richard built a new town hall in honor of his mother. Kahilu Town Hall and the Kahilu Theatre.

HY: Can you describe what it was like, social activity at Barbara's [*Barbara*] Hall?

EK: It was mostly (used) for ranch affairs, ranch functions. When we grew up, we're not able to throw a party or have a big function like we do now. Everybody just goes out and have a big *lu`au* or for a wedding or baptism. Those days, we didn't have such a thing. So the hall was strictly used for ranch functions. (It was not opened to the community.)

HY: What did it look like then?

EK: (The building, looks, remain the same.) It was smaller than what it is now. It was just a big hall and a back room and upstairs for movie projector. We used to have silent pictures those days. Once in a while, we had silent pictures (shown for ranch) families.

HY: You say this was only for the ranch employees?

EK: Employees.

HY: So if you weren't employed by the ranch, you weren't able to come and see movies?

EK: No, you weren't able to come. And the people respected that. They didn't take advantage of it, you know. That's where they had the Christmas-tree program and the big *lu`au* and silent movies. And meetings would be held, as long it's ranch-associated, like Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, you know, that are sponsored by the ranch. They would have first use of that facility. Otherwise, there was no other place to hold a meeting, except to go (to) the schools.

HY: What use did Barbara's [*Barbara*] Hall serve during the war?

EK: That's when the marines took over and they added on to the old Barbara Hall and made extensions more for gathering place. The boys would go there and play cards and have bingo games. Recreation . . .

HY: Was that only military?

EK: No. Our local people used to join in with them. And then they built the (movie) theater right next door to the hall. The military did that.

HY: What was the theater called?

EK: We used to call it Kahilu Theatre. And after the military left, (the theater was operated by a private individual).

HY: [*Is this different than the Kahilu Theatre that Richard Smart built?*]

EK: (Yes, this was a movie theater built by the military.)

HY: Private ownership?

EK: Private ownership, mm hmm.

HY: Was the theater for the whole community . . .

EK: For the community, mm hmm.

HY: It was built by the military, but everybody could watch movies.

EK: Mm hmm. Everybody came and watched movies. In fact, the war did a lot of good for Waimea. They brought in the theater, and brought in electricity, that's a big help.

HY: There was no electricity in Waimea prior to the war?

EK: No. Well, Parker Ranch had their own generator. So whatever functions was run by the generator (were for ranch activities). So most of the homes were all with kerosene lamps, kerosene stoves.

HY: What about the water supply during . . .

EK: Water supply, we had lot(s) of water. We didn't have too many people in the community. We didn't have the hotels. The farms were just limited. So we had lot(s) of water.

HY: And when the military came in, there was no problem?

EK: No problem. There was no problem.

HY: Did they build their own reservoir or . . .

EK: (I'm not sure.) The county (constructed a couple reservoirs for the community). Of course, Parker Ranch has their own reservoir up there, too. They pipe it down to all the different pastures on the ranch.

HY: Did the county build the new reservoir specifically because of the influx of more people . . .

EK: No. Oh, no, well, I wouldn't say influx of new people because we needed the reservoir for agricultural use. So that's when the state came in and put up a reservoir strictly for farmers.

HY: When was that? About when?

EK: Oh, that was about '65, between '65 and '70, yeah. Because since we have all this---open up more lands for Hawaiian Homes [*State Department of Hawaiian Home Lands*], these lands were leased by Parker Ranch for long-term lease until the lease expired. And that's when Hawaiian Homes took all the land back and awarded it to the Hawaiians. So it's just the farm lots that are using the state reservoir. The rest is all county water.

HY: You mentioned about doing laundry, helping your mother do laundry when the military was here for twenty-five cents for a pair of (khakis).

EK: A pair, yeah.

HY: . . . pants and shirt.

EK: Yeah, and that was all—that was my mother [*Eliza Purdy Lindsey*]. She took in laundry.

HY: When demand for laundry lessened after the military left, did some people still continue to set up business with laundry?

EK: No.

HY: Or did all of that just end?

EK: It all stopped. Yeah, it just stopped. Of course, I think the military must have had their own Laundromat on base because the women here (didn't) do laundry for all of the boys. It's just limited. You could do just so much.

HY: And so the social activity increased after they left.

EK: After they left.

HY: You got into doing all these dance parties.

EK: Mm hmm. Lot of parties, lot of traveling to different areas, you know, get together. At that time we made lot of friends, too.

HY: Was that throughout this . . .

EK: Just this side of the island here. Yeah. Waimea, Honoka`a, Kohala. We even

used to go to Kona.

HY: And how long did that period of time last for?

EK: Ah, let me see. Maybe five, seven years.

HY: Why do you think there was all this activity suddenly?

EK: Because we were young at that time, and we were in the mood, you know. So we had to do something. The menfolks was no problems because they always—like my husband, he would have his basketball team and baseball team. So he had his own activities, but we womenfolks were just staying home most of the time taking care of (children), and my position was going to work. So I didn't have no free time to really enjoy, except to go into church on Sundays, taking the children to Sunday school and stay back for church service. So this is. . . . Well, it was (an outing for me).

HY: The Red Cross activities, did they stop?

EK: They stopped, mm hmm, right after the war, yeah. Everything stopped.

HY: What were some of the activities that the military had to do here while they were here? Was it just . . .

EK: Oh, yeah. Lot of baseball, lot of boxing. We used to enjoy the boxing, yeah.

HY: Why were they here for their military duties? Was this just an R and R [*rest and recreation*] place or . . .

EK: Well, it seemed like it was an R and R. To some, it was an R and R. And the others, it's preparation, training, to go overseas. They did lot of training up at Pohakuloa, down at the beach (on Parker Ranch lands), where they used to fire their artillery, whatever. And I think that's what it was.

HY: Were there ever any injuries?

EK: Here? Not that I can recall. Oh, we had couple drownings down at Hapuna Beach.

HY: What happened?

EK: They went swimming and I think probably two boys drowned down there because they were on the deeper side (of the beach). Because Hapuna Beach is so long and they always say one section has a strong undertow and the other section towards Kona way is a better place to go and swim. I guess they didn't know (what area was dangerous). We even lost lives of our own community. We lost a little girl down there. The same area. And I think two soldiers, I'm sure, got caught (from) the undertow.

HY: Did they have to do any ordnance cleanup after they left?

EK: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. They kept the whole group back to go and scout all the grounds that they used for practicing to find all these dead duds. Some of them were not even dead because two of our ranch---one ranch employee got killed from the explosion while they were working.

HY: Was the employee helping them clean up or they were just . . .

EK: No, I don't think so. They were working down in the area and these boys found the duds. And they tried to collect it and bring it home. Something like that. And I don't know what happened. They threw it in the working truck and the dud must have hit the metal part of the truck and it exploded. So it killed one (instantly) and sent two to the hospital—major injuries. I think (one) died (later). The ranch had to have the military come back again and scout the whole area. Be sure there's no more duds left.

HY: What happened to the land where the military was?

EK: Oh, it's still Parker Ranch. It was loaned out, just loaned to them, yeah. I don't know . . .

HY: Was it used for anything after that?

EK: As pasture, (resuming normal activities).

HY: Pastureland?

EK: Mostly pasture. They were on pastureland most of the time.

HY: What about the military that was behind your, I guess, your mother's house?

EK: (Ranch lands were in the back of) my mother-in-law's house and my mother's house. So I guess the ranch offered them all this available space for them to camp. The ranch contributed a lot towards this military training. Because they even helped the military providing them meat. And the farmers were able to sell their vegetables. So, it benefited the community, too. The store, I understood, Hayashi Store, when the military boys came in, they just raided the store. What I mean "raided," they just went in and bought (all the khakis). Because their clothes, as I say, was wet, wet when they came. So they needed extra supply of clothing. So luckily, Hayashi Store had khaki pants and jeans. And the food, you know, they would just go in and buy and buy. They practically bought the store out. So that was the time when the businesses were making money. Yeah. Through the military.

HY: You know, the socks and the scarves the first-aid people made . . .

EK: Ladies (in the community).

HY: . . . ladies made, did they sell them? Or did they donate it?

EK: No, it was donated. Mostly for hospital use. And well, some of them would go out in the wet section of the ranch (and) would have to be warmly clothed. So they needed all this extra clothing.

HY: You mentioned before that, after Mutual Telephone [*Company*], you began working for the doctor's office.

EK: Mm hmm.

HY: Why was it that you left Mutual Telephone and began working . . .

EK: No, we didn't leave Mutual. They gave priority because we were going automatic.

HY: What does that mean?

EK: (Communications were improved and progress was considered and automation took over.) (Thus the) dial phone (went into effect).

HY: Oh, I see.

EK: Yeah, the company did away with the manual type of. . . . You know, eliminate employees that way. We didn't need to have (the) switchboard. So what they did was, rather than putting us out of work, we were offered either to go to Hilo or to Honolulu and work on the switchboard. But (we were) all married and lived here, so we couldn't just leave the family and go. That was the conversion from the manual type of operation of the switchboard to the automatic. We knew it was coming because they were preparing for (it). Hilo was the only ones with dial phones. The country area all had switchboards.

HY: So what year was that?

EK: Nineteen fifty-seven. So after that, I did . . . (EK coughs.)

HY: Are you okay?

EK: I'm okay. This is normal with me.

HY: Take your time.

EK: After that, I did housework. I did housecleaning for some people. Then I went to work at the store, [*The*] Parker Ranch Store at the time (that was bought by Mr. and Mrs. Kenichi Hayashi). Couple years. Parker Ranch [*then*] decided that the doctor that they (hired) should service the community as a whole, rather than just ranch employees. And that's when the doctor came to see me and asked if I was interested in working at the medical center [*Parker Ranch Dispensary*]. Take care books, receptionist, and (general office work).

HY: When you worked at the store, what were your duties there?

EK: Sales work, everything. Stocking the shelves, and filling gas in the cars. We had a gas station there, too, so we go out and put gas in the cars.

HY: Did that store accommodate the whole community?

EK: Community, mm hmm. We had other stores like Chock In Store, [I.] Oda Store, and Fukushima Store, but the ranch store was the bigger one with(in) the community.

HY: Were those stores seen as competitors?

EK: No, no. Funny, each store had its own customers. The surrounding neighborhood would patronize one store. It was very unusual. Because when I was married to (my husband), we moved (in) with his mother up the road. Oda Store was across, was on the opposite side of our house. Naturally, no car. We didn't have car to go just run up and down the road, so we just have to walk to one store, bought our supplies there.

HY: What kind of wages did you get working at Parker Ranch Store?

EK: Oh, let me see. Dollar quarter [\$1.25] (a day). Oh, was so cheap. Maybe dollar (a day). But still, that's kind of high, those days. (Five) dollars a (week). Nobody earn that kind of money. That's very, very cheap.

HY: Did other employees of the ranch have better wages after the war?

EK: (Yes, there was some increase in pay, however), it took quite a while before reorganization came in. As far as pay scale, and benefits, and having new people come in to manage. They made some changes, yeah.

HY: Who was responsible for the reorganization?

EK: (It was not till about 1969 when Mr. Smart brought in a group of consultants) [*Rubel-Lent & Associates of Phoenix, Arizona*] to (manage) the ranch. They made the changes. They saw what was wrong. It takes an outsider to see what's wrong. So they made lot of changes, which was (for) the better, for the best of the ranch. So that included promotions, and pay scale, better pay and better benefits. That's when we had HMSA [*Hawai'i Medical Service Association*]. Prior to that, the ranch took care of all medicals.

HY: Do you think people were happy about the change?

EK: I think so, yeah. They were happy that they were treated fairly. Actually, we didn't have any union here because we didn't need a union, too, because we felt the ranch was fair to all its employees.

HY: What about the housing?

EK: Housing, you live in a ranch house. You don't pay anything. It's a free housing. Because we were in a ranch house before we built this house. So

it's---you have a free house, free meat, free milk. And if you're a Hawaiian, you have poi. If you're a Japanese, you have rice. So a bag rice.

HY: So you folks, you get both?

EK: No, no poi. So we had free rice, milk, butter, beef. So that kind of makes up for it.

HY: Did the housing quality change after the war?

EK: When Richard [*Smart*] came back.

HY: So it was in the sixties?

EK: During the sixties when the quality of the house changed. The appearance and the renovation.

HY: The house that you live in now, where we are right now, is this also provided for by Parker Ranch?

EK: No. The only thing Parker Ranch provided here was, they opened up this subdivision for employees with twenty-five years of service who were given the priority to buy the land. They had the lots all cut up for employees with twenty-five years service.

HY: So you bought this lot?

EK: We bought this. And then we put up our own house.

HY: And then you built on it?

EK: Uh huh [*yes*].

HY: I see.

EK: But they gave it at a very, very reasonable price. So it was just like a giveaway.

HY: And how long have you lived here?

EK: Twenty-three years now.

HY: Okay. Going back to after you worked at Parker Ranch Store, you started working at the medical center . . .

EK: At the doctor's office.

HY: Was it called Parker Ranch (Dispensary)?

EK: Uh huh. It was still addressed Parker Ranch. Parker Ranch Dispensary, that's

what I used to answer. Yeah, it was a nice doctor. And then when he came in, then we started servicing the community as a whole. Because you need to. Because when it's emergency like that, you cannot turn anybody away. And that's when, I think, the Honoka`a Hospital came about, too. So our patients would go to Honoka`a for surgeries or care.

HY: So was the Honoka`a Hospital only a referral place or how was it associated with Parker Ranch?

EK: (It was a state hospital servicing the Hamakua and South Kohala district.) If it was a serious case, he [the doctor] would refer you to Hilo or to Honolulu. And if it's a ranch employee, to go to Honolulu, you need a referral of a doctor. Because we need to let the office know. Because they would contribute to the expenses for the transportation and the hospital in Honolulu. Of course, the ranch has its own home nursing, I guess you would call. A home nurse, she would go around and check on all the patients, all the employees who's ill and make recommendations to the doctor or to the office.

HY: You remember who that was? The home nurse?

EK: Well, Louise Case.

HY: Louise Case?

EK: When I came in, it was she, Louise Case. Before that, our nurses worked with the doctor strictly for employees only.

HY: You remember what your wages were?

EK: I think I was doing pretty good. (This was in 1960 when I started off with \$150 a month. Before Dr. Eklund retired, probably a year before, I was earning \$350 a month.)

HY: And you were considered an employee of Parker Ranch then?

EK: No, no. I was employed by the doctor, even though we worked for the ranch. So he pays my salary.

HY: And was he paid by . . .

EK: The ranch. He's paid by the ranch. And the ranch provides the facilities, you know, the dispensary and the. . . .

HY: Did the ranch also provide for medical supplies?

EK: Dr. [Raymond] Eklund would buy them, and then, yeah, it's charged to the ranch. Medical supplies.

HY: I think we're running out of tape again.

HY: How long were you with . . .

EK: Dr. Eklund, before he retired, he moved back to the Mainland, was eight years. He finally decided that they're going to move back to the Mainland. In the meantime there was another doctor that was practicing in the community, so he took over the medical dispensary [*Parker Ranch Dispensary*]. Of course, then he brought in---his own secretary, and receptionist, and nurse. So that means we were out, you know.

HY: Oh, I see. What was his name?

EK: Dr. [Keith] Nesting.

HY: Nesting?

EK: Nesting, yeah.

HY: So after leaving the . . .

EK: After leaving the medical center [*Parker Ranch Dispensary*], I went to the Mauna Loa Observatory—Mauna Loa [*site of the*] High Altitude Observatory. But we had our office down here in town. So I worked for---it's a federal-sponsored project. And we had scientists from the Mainland come down that would do the study of the clouds and the sun.

HY: What were your duties specifically?

EK: Oh, we did lot of graph work. I don't know, lot of paperwork. Get information prepared, ready, for the scientists to evaluate the weather conditions.

HY: Were you full time?

EK: No, part-time. Part-time, which was nice in a way. Because (I) needed to be home at the time, too, (to be with my children). All my (children attended the) Kamehameha Schools in Honolulu. They started from the seventh grade. So every (summer) they come back (for vacation) that means (lots of time put in to do) sewing new clothes. I used to do quite a bit of sewing. And those days was all this cancan slips and those full gathers at the waist, which was easy except to make the gathers. But preparation to get them back to school, it took lot of work, lot of time to get our (children) ready to get back to school.

HY: You ever sew as a business?

EK: No, no, no.

HY: Only for your. . . .

EK: Only for my children. Yeah. They didn't mind it, you know. I was pretty good.

I think I was. Commercial patterns (were sold in the store). I would follow the commercial patterns. Simplicity [*patterns*], at the time. And then till my oldest daughter, she's a very---in fact when she went to school, she wanted to be a homemaking teacher. She did. The two girls went to school in Missouri after graduating from Kamehameha Schools. And her first teaching assignment was in Connecticut. My oldest one. And then she wanted to come home. So, she taught at Kohala High School. Then went down to Honolulu, taught school down there. And then, finally back to Honoka`a. So she's been there (since).

HY: All of your children are professionals.

EK: (Laughs) Well, (each) in their line of work. And I'm so glad my girls know how to cook, my boys know how to cook. I mean, it's not like [*points to her husband in the next room*]. . . .

(Laughter)

HY: You taught your sons and your daughters how to cook?

EK: Well, because going to Kamehameha, it's a boarding school. You have to learn how to do your own laundry, take care your beds, and things like that. And then when they went to college, they have to manage by themselves and learn how to cook. They're real good cooks. Even James, my youngest one. When he was at Hilo college [*University of Hawai`i at Hilo*], they live in dorms, but still they have to provide their own meals. Larry is a very good cook. Lester is a good cook, too. They always like to try new recipes. And my girls are really good. So I always feel that their husbands are real fortunate. You don't find that anymore.

So, Leo does lot of sewing. During the summer, she's always busy getting clothes ready for school. I still have my old machine there since 1957.

HY: You ever use it anymore?

EK: I use it. I use it now more for hemming and alterations. My grandkids would come or my boys would come and tell me hem up their pants or, you know. I don't mind doing it.

HY: So when you were working part-time with the observatory [*Mauna Loa Observatory*] . . .

EK: Yeah, five years. And then I guess the federal government ran out of funds. They couldn't carry on the project so there I was, without a job again.

HY: Did they employ other people from Waimea?

EK: (Yes.) There were three of us in the office, local girls. And the scientists would come from the Mainland, two scientists from the Mainland.

HY: Did the scientists live in Waimea?

EK: They lived here, mm hmm.

HY: What were their names?

EK: One was Mr. Richard Hansen and his wife, Shirley. They both worked together in the same. . . . The other one was Charles Garcia.

HY: What kind of work were they doing there?

EK: They would go up and they have all these instruments up there in the observatory. And they would look at the. . . . It's not quite like the—what's this now?—Canada-France [*Canada-France-Hawai'i Telescope Corporation*]. Almost. Well, Canada-France [*observatory at Mauna Kea*] is study of the stars and the moon. They were with the sun and the weather, the clouds. The formation of the clouds. They could tell you about the weather, what kind of weather we're going [*to*] have for the day.

HY: Was their work primarily research, do you think?

EK: Research, yeah. It's mostly like a research-type thing. Yeah. Because the home office was in Boulder, Colorado. So all the reports had to go back to them.

HY: Do you know what branch of the federal government it was? [*The Mauna Loa Observatory is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.*]

EK: No. Something energy. I don't know. Oh, High Altitude—it was called the High Altitude Energy something, I forget. [*The High Altitude Observatory at Mauna Loa was a section of NCAR, National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado.*]

HY: So when they left then, you were out of a job again?

EK: Uh huh, mm hmm. (Laughs) That's why I was not a professional woman. Not in one particular field. But I was a professional woman in all areas of (laughs) employment that I (was employed). But I thought I was fortunate because I was able to (learn and do) all this new type of work I was doing.

After that--and then 1974, that's when I went down and worked at the Kawamata Farms [*Inc.*], the rose farm. It's just that I needed something to do. I wanted something to do. So whatever came along, I just grabbed it and made real useful out of it and proved to myself that I can do it, irregardless what kind of job it is.

HY: Did you start part-time or full-time?

EK: (I started off as a part-time for couple of years.)

HY: What do you do at Kawamata Farms?

EK: Well, at the time, (the Kawamatas) were raising carnations, (only) carnations. So it was just disbudding, and harvesting, and packing, and shipping. And at the same time, I was taking care of all the bills, send them out, deposits, and general office work. My job was in and out, in the office and out in the fields. And then we started planting roses, so it was the same thing, (gathering) the boys and the girls (to do planting), harvest the rose, grade, and bundle, shipping. I accepted that position like it was my own (farm), you know. The Kawamatas (had faith in me and depended) on me and thought I was reliable, so. (Laughs) I stayed with them for fourteen years, then I decided to retire when I was sixty-seven. Retired at sixty-seven. Two years at home and I went right back (to work) again.

HY: You got restless?

EK: Not restless. Well, I (guess I) did. If they hadn't called me back, I would have gone and seek employment at the new shopping center that came in, KTA [*KTA Super Stores*] and at least do something. But then, luckily, when they called me, I thought, well, something that I (already) know. So it would be no big deal. I just fall right into it again.

HY: Why did they call you again after you retired?

EK: The turnover was too great. (Also, the present employee was due for maternity leave.) So Mr. [*Raymond*] Kawamata (phoned me and said,) "How about you coming back?"

I said, "Well, under my terms, though." I told him. (Laughs)

HY: Did you start part-time, this time?

EK: Yeah, this time, I'm part-time. But I think, eventually, looks like I'm going back full-time, I don't know.

(Laughter)

EK: Because the hours are getting longer now. I used to work maybe five hours a day. I go in at nine [*o'clock*]. I have two-hour lunch break. And then I quit at four [*o'clock*]. Which was good. Until now, the assistant manager to the manager left the company, (moved) back to the Mainland. He's from the Mainland, so he wanted to go home with his family.

HY: When did the farm start?

EK: The rose farm started in [19]74.

HY: So it started when you. . . .

EK: When I was there. Prior to that, they were in all vegetable crops. Tomatoes, greenhouse tomatoes, cucumber, bell pepper. And out in the fields would be cabbage, Chinese cabbage, lettuce, celery.

HY: Do you know why they started to go into the flowers?

EK: Well, Mr. [Naoji] Kawamata, the older of the Kawamatas, went to Maui for some kind of trip and visited (the) greenhouses, carnation farms, rose farms. They were backyard-type (farms). And he got interested in that. And the university-extension people [*University of Hawai'i, Agricultural Extension Service*] kind of encouraged him. They thought Waimea would be ideal for this type of flowers. So he gave up all his tomato planting and went into carnations first.

HY: Was he successful as a vegetable farmer as well?

EK: As well. And he was---prior to vegetable, being a farmer, he was a fisherman. He was a well-known commercial fisherman from Honolulu, from Hale'iwa. And they moved up here.

HY: When did they come here?

EK: Oh, I don't know when they came in. The [19]60s, I think. Mm hmm, yeah. So they moved up here. Well, there was a girl that worked there. She and I were good friends. So she was employed at the farm. They needed a worker, so she asked me, "Oh, you want to come?" and I said, "Sure." I was without a job, anyway, at the time. So I went down. I was getting tired, but I'm not the type to give up, so I just (laughs) stayed on.

HY: What other current activities are you involved in?

EK: Oh, I think I'm slowing down in all my activities. I'm just concentrating on my work and now (whispers) my golf.

HY: You golf?

(Laughter)

EK: I was active in church work, too. Hisao and I were very active in church work. But sometimes you think it's time to retire from all these activities. Because we're old. I'm in my seventies, he's in his eighties. And there's all these young people coming up. I think they should be taking over. I'm (always) in the kitchen, and I miss all the activities that's going on in the church. I was strong—we both were strong with church work. Of course, we kind of relax now little bit. We're slowing down. Really, it's not that we don't want to get involved. It's just that we feel that we can't do anymore. When you come old you get little bit more frustrated if things don't go right. You get (tired physically). So it's best not to get involved.

And then he does his own planting. He has his own little greenhouse. So he

keeps himself busy that way. Of course, he's active in the Lions Club. He's really active. I don't belong to any clubs because I can't find the time to go to. Sometimes they have their meetings during the daytime and I can't go. And in the evenings, once I come home, I don't want to get out. I just want to stay home.

HY: The greenhouse that he has now, is it just for his own personal . . .

EK: Personal. Just to keep him going.

HY: He enjoys that?

EK: Yeah, he enjoys doing it. He loves to putter around and experiment (on) new plants.

HY: You mentioned about your mother, how she was the one that did the finances in your family. And then you had said that you kept track of the books for Kawamata Farms.

EK: Yeah, I did.

HY: Are you financial planner at home as well?

EK: No, at home here? At my house? It's my husband.

HY: Oh, I see. Okay.

EK: (Chuckles) Yeah, I don't. He takes care. But at the farm, I take care all the books. I'm the only one that knows the financial standing of the farm. Income, expenses, and so forth. Yeah. Do all the payroll. We have about thirty-two employees there now.

HY: What do you see as the future for Waimea? Where do you see it heading?

EK: I think there's a real potential growth here. As far as business, I don't know, except for the hotels. But the hotels, doesn't seem like they're doing too well. But we have so many small businesses right now in town and I don't think they're doing that well. My niece has an ice cream stand [*Sugar and Spice*] (at) the shopping center. I think she's just (almost) making a go, enough to cover expense (and payroll). Until we have growth here and we have new. . . . I don't know, ranching alone is not enough. And farming, you can't depend on farmers, workers. You know, it's hard to find workers because they're all at the hotels. And the farmers right now, the only farmers that's farming are the father and their sons. And once the father goes, I don't think the sons are interested to keep up. It's hard work. Farming is real hard work. In fact, lot of the farmers down there have sold their farms and gone into. . . . Some of them are retiring from the income on the sale of the farms. So we might not have vegetables in the future, except from the Mainland.

HY: Is there anything you'd like to add, looking back? Especially during wartime,

anything you'd like to add?

EK: (Pause) Well, I don't know. I've seen my children grow up and. . . . During the wartime, not much changes took place, except I would say we got to be a little more civilized. (Laughs) My only regret is—up till now—is that. . . . Well, I'm proud (of) my (children) because we were able to provide them with all the needs. And yet, sometimes when I look back, now that we don't have anybody to support, I wish I had what I'm getting now. I wish I'd had the money at that time. Because my girls struggled through high school. My (children) struggled. We couldn't even give them extra money for spending. Well, that's the way we were, too, when we went to school. We would save our lunch money for the end of the week to go shopping. Every Friday, (our matron at the boarding school) would take us into town for shopping, with twenty-five cents. That's all we (had for shopping). And the most we would buy is *crack seed*, at that time. Seeds, you know, Chinese [*preserved*] seeds. But now that we have grand(children), I can use it on my grand(children). When I look at Leo, and I look at Leila and Larry, oh, I just want to cry. Because I wish I had had money at the time to give them when they really needed it, when they really wanted it. But they had to go out and work on their own. And if five dollars a month I would send for spending money, that's not enough but that's all I could afford at the time. My mother, when I look back at my mother, my father died when she had about two or three more young (girls) in the family that never even got to high school yet. So she struggled. She struggled with ranch pension. But luckily at the time I was working, so Hisao and I were able to help (her) support the family. We really did help support our family. Yeah, mm hmm. With very small income, but we managed. But lot of sacrifices. Every time we had a car, it was a secondhand car. It was not a brand-new car. We couldn't afford it.

HY: Okay. Anything else?

EK: No. Just . . .

HY: Okay. Thank you very much. (EK laughs.) Go ahead.

EK: I'm happy for my family and all the blessings we've had up till now. If it wasn't for (our faith in) church, I don't think we're able to carry on. That's why (we were) really involved (in) church work, especially Hisa. He was always a moderator, or chairman of this committee, chairman of that committee. He served on the (Hawai`i) Island Association on the state level, you know, as far as church work. And education is his top priority for his children. That's why he's always involved with the schools, PTA [*Parent-Teacher Association*]. And all functions of the school, he was involved.

HY: It seems like education was really emphasized. Emphasized and . . .

EK: Yeah. Because we couldn't get (to college). We wanted to. We wanted to have an education, but we couldn't (do it financially). But all we could see at the time was, "I want you to be a teacher," and "You be a dentist," or something, that was it. So when Larry (our third child) went into Hawaiian

language, we thought, "Oh. . . . (HY laughs) What's that all about?" We wanted him to be a dentist or a doctor or something. But his mind was (set). He was interested---it was through the encouragement of his teachers at Kamehameha (Schools) and at the university [*University of Hawai'i*]. That's how he got into (the Hawaiian language)—and he's really, really (doing a) good (job). And he's single, so he's very independent. (Laughs) So when he said he's (majoring in the) Hawaiian language and the Hawaiian culture, (we supported him all the way.) (Leonetta, our oldest, is in education—elementary vice principal at Honoka`a School; Leila, our second, is administrative assistant at the Lucy Henriques Medical Center; Lester is now bank manager at American Savings; and Kimo, our youngest, is back in college, third-year student majoring in chiropractor.)

And that's the thing now, you know. (The Hawaiian language.)

HY: Okay.

EK: You want this [microphone]?

HY: Thank you.

EK: Yeah. (Laughs)

END OF INTERVIEW